

**SIGNAL AMPLIFICATION CIRCUIT AND PROCESS FOR
NEUTRALIZING NOISE FROM A POWER SUPPLY VOLTAGE**

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to the field of integrated circuits, and more particularly, to integrated circuits for amplification of a signal
5 received from a electret microphone and to a process for neutralizing noise in a microphone power supply voltage.

Background of the Invention

10 In many audio and video devices, an audio circuit includes an electret microphone and a low noise preamplifier into which a signal is input from a microphone. The preamplifier output signal may then be converted into a digital signal in an analog-digital
15 converter and then amplified, processed, filtered and possibly memorized or stored in this form.

Electret microphones must be polarized by a positive DC voltage through a pull-up resistor initializing the microphone operating state. The
20 microphone output signal, formed by a variable current, passes through this pull-up resistor so that the variable voltage at the terminals of this resistor is representative of the microphone output signal. One of the main problems with this type of audio circuit is

the lack of immunity of the useful microphone output signal to noise affecting the positive DC biasing voltage of the electret microphone.

One known method of correcting this problem is to filter the biasing voltage before applying it to the pull-up resistor. This filtering may be done for example using an R.C. circuit. This process is expensive because it requires the addition of an additional capacitor external to the integrated circuit, and also it is not very efficient, particularly at the low frequencies present in the audio range.

Summary of the Invention

An object of this invention is to neutralize noise in the biasing voltage of the electret microphone.

Any noise on the microphone biasing voltage is perceived as being a signal by the pull-up resistor initializing the position of the microphone, due to the way in which the microphone is connected and the fact that it is equivalent to a current source. Therefore, such noise is amplified by the low noise preamplifier (LNA). Although a differential structure is usually used for this preamplifier, it amplifies the noise in the biasing voltage.

An approach of the present invention is to correlate the microphone initialization voltage with the internal reference of the low noise amplifier or preamplifier. Consequently, the noise in this voltage is perceived as being a common mode noise on the preamplifier inputs and not a difference signal. In this way the noise is rejected, by difference, by the differential structure instead of being amplified.

Thus, the invention relates to a signal amplification circuit comprising an amplifier with a differential structure comprising two inputs. A first input receives a reference voltage and a second input receives the signal to be amplified. The two inputs are connected to each other through a biasing resistor. The first input is also coupled to the second input through a signal resistor through which a current passes, the variations of which are representative of the signal to be amplified.

The invention also relates to a process for neutralizing noise in an electret microphone power supply voltage. A microphone output signal is represented by the variations in a current passing through a pull-up resistor initializing the microphone operating position. The power supply voltage is input to this pull-up resistor. The process includes coupling a first terminal of the pull-up resistor firstly to the microphone output and secondly to a second input of an amplifier with a differential structure. The process further includes coupling a second terminal of the pull-up resistor to a first input to the amplifier with a differential structure.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The invention and its advantage compared with prior art will be better understood after reading the following description with regard to the attached drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a functional diagram of a prior art circuit; and

Figure 2 is a diagram of a circuit of an embodiment of the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Figure 1 shows a conventional circuit used for amplification of the output signal from a microphone 2. This signal is composed of a current produced by the microphone and developed in a pull-up and signal resistor 3, one connection of the resistor being connected to a microphone output 4. The other connection of resistor 3 is connected to a DC pull-up voltage VCC acting on the operating state of the microphone 2. This DC voltage is applied through a filter circuit composed of a resistor 15 and a capacitor 16. The output signal from the microphone 4 is connected to an input 9 to a differential structure amplifier 5. This amplifier has two inputs, a first 8 and a second 9, and two outputs, a first 6 and a second 7 known as the positive and negative outputs. A reference voltage is applied to the first input 8, and the signal to be amplified is applied to the second input 9, this signal being taken from the output 4 of microphone 2 through a filter capacitor 17. The two inputs 8 and 9 are connected to each other through a biasing resistor 10. In this type of system, it can be seen that any unfiltered noise from the pull-up DC voltage VCC is entirely transmitted to the pull-up resistor 3 and is therefore amplified by circuit 5.

Figure 2 shows a circuit 1 according to one embodiment of this invention. In this circuit, elements with the same function as the elements shown in figure 1 are represented with the same reference number. The circuit shown in figure 2 is different from the circuit shown in figure 1 because a reference voltage VREF is applied firstly to the first input 8 of the differential structure amplifier 5, and secondly to the pull-up and signal resistor 3 initializing the operating state of the microphone 2.

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